

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK 2022

MAY 9-15, 2022



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NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

MAY 9-15, 2022

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NURSES CONTINUE TO ANSWER THE CALL

BY JENNIFER MCFEE

The pandemic has brought waves of challenges to the health-care realm, yet through it all, nurses continue to rise up and answer the call of duty.

During a patient's health-care journey, nurses play pivotal roles at all stages of life — and their courage and commitment deserve to be celebrated.

Across the country and around the world, nurses are honoured annually during the week of May 12, coinciding with nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale's birthday.

This year, National Nursing Week runs from Monday, May 9 to Sunday, May 15. The Canadian Nurses Association developed this year's theme, #WeAnswerTheCall, to showcase the multitude of roles that nurses play.

At the same time, National Nursing Week aims to increase awareness about important nursing contributions while also highlighting accomplishments in the profession.

To mark the moment, one impactful idea would be to write a personalized thank-you note to show appreciation to nursing staff. These small gestures can make a big difference.

Also, if you choose to post a story on social media about an exceptional nurse, use the hashtag #KnowANurse to acknowledge the positive experience.

It's worth taking the time to thank our nurses for continuing to answer the call!

COLLEGE OF REGISTERED NURSES OF MANITOBA

Registered nurses (RNs) make a monumental difference as highly qualified, regulated health-care professionals who provide nursing care to individuals, families, communities and groups — at all stages of life and health.

"They assess, diagnose, plan nursing care and evaluate that care, and work in inter-professional teams with other nurses and health-care professionals," explains Katherine Stansfield, CEO and registrar of the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba.

"They practise in a wide array of areas from acute care in hospitals to community care in clinics and to public health on the street. You can find RNs working in schools, people's homes, remote nursing stations, long-term care, as well as in many leadership positions in administration, education and research. Registered nurses are involved in literally every aspect and domain of health care."

Canadian-educated nursing students seeking to become an RN must complete a baccalaureate-level program approved by the regulatory body

in their province.

"They must meet certain requirements defined in law that assure safe nursing practice," Stansfield says.

"These include demonstrating fitness to practice, an appropriate level of English language proficiency and passing the national licensure exam."

Nurse practitioners are registered nurses with advanced education at the master's level, which provides them with knowledge and skill to manage patient care — including diagnosing, prescribing and evaluating care.

"Nurse practitioners work in diverse settings from rural and remote to urban, in places like community clinics, long-term care homes, hospitals and sole practice. No matter the setting, nurse practitioners are part of an inter-professional team and are an invaluable part of the health-care system," Stansfield adds.



Katherine Stansfield
CEO and registrar of the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba

"Someone looking to become a nurse practitioner must first meet all the qualifications as a registered nurse and achieve registration as an RN. They must then complete a master's degree in nursing and pass a national licensure exam."

Registered nurses and nurse practitioners already working in Manitoba must renew their registration annually and complete ongoing quality assurance reviews to maintain competence. That assures the Manitoba public that every registered nurse and nurse practitioner has met the requirements for safe, competent and ethical practice — and continues to demonstrate that competence throughout their careers.

As of Dec. 31, 2021, there were 13,373 RNs and 306 nurse practitioners in Manitoba. And for those considering a career in the profession, Stansfield offers some words of encouragement.

"A career as a registered nurse or a nurse

practitioner is fulfilling, diverse and challenging. It is a career that opens many doors and offers many opportunities for ongoing learning. It involves working with people in all walks and stages of life, and is always dynamic and meaningful," she says.

"The future for the registered nursing profession is promising as many opportunities for RNs and nurse practitioners to utilize their full knowledge and skill become more evident."

Registered nurses' authorized prescriber role is a great example of the profession's knowledge and skill being applied in new ways to improve Manitobans' access to care, she adds.

In addition, the pandemic has provided ample

|| Nurses of all professions have made significant personal contributions to keeping Manitobans safe during the pandemic."

opportunities for RNs and nurse practitioners to fully apply their knowledge and skills in many different areas. These areas include contact tracing, providing information and counselling about vaccinations, and assessing the impact of COVID-19 on communities and groups.

At the same time, RNs and nurse practitioners have been called to step up and fill many additional needs by working with inter-professional teams in new ways.

"Nurses of all professions have made significant personal contributions to keeping Manitobans safe during the pandemic," Stansfield says.

"I would like to acknowledge their skill, knowledge and compassion for the health and well-being of our province — and thank them for their critical and unfailing support of our health-care system."

COLLEGE OF LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES OF MANITOBA

Manitoba's licensed practical nurses (LPNs) care for clients across their lifespan and within a wide range of practice environments.

They practise both autonomously and collaboratively with other members of the health-care team, working with clients whose care needs vary in complexity, predictability and stability.

"LPNs are nurses who graduate from a two-year diploma program. LPNs are educated from the same body of knowledge as other nurses,"

says Jennifer Breton, executive director of the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba.

"LPNs also apply the same framework in their practice as other nursing professionals — assessment, diagnosis/determination, planning implementation, evaluation."

In Manitoba, this two-year college program is offered at Assiniboine Community College, Université de Saint-Boniface and University College of the North.

"Assiniboine Community College also delivers the Practical Nurse Qualification Recognition program for internationally educated nurses who are referred by the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba," Breton adds.

"This bridging program is highly successful in supporting internationally educated nurses to gain registration and practise nursing in Manitoba."

LPNs can also be graduates from a program in another jurisdiction that provides equivalent competencies. In that case, the applicant must meet criteria for registration as an LPN, which is set out in the LPN Act and Regulation.

After graduating from their nursing program, LPNs bolster their nursing knowledge, skills and judgments throughout their careers through formal and informal education, as well as through practical experience.

Currently, 3,700 LPNs are practising in Manitoba, making them the second largest group of regulated health professionals in the province.

And for those who decide to answer the call, Breton says nursing offers a challenging yet rewarding career.

"Like other health-care professionals, LPNs have persevered, through protracted challenging circumstances, to deliver high-quality nursing care to Manitobans across the province," she says.

"LPNs have once again shown leadership, courage and commitment every day."

COLLEGE OF REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES OF MANITOBA

Registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) practise in collaboration with other health professionals in the realms of health, education, social services, justice, and mental health and addictions systems.

"There are workforce needs in all of these systems, and RPNs are an important part of that. The needs of the population are such that we will expect that the demands for RPNs will continue to grow," says Laura Panteluk, executive director and registrar of the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba.

"There are a lot of opportunities in psychiatric nursing with roles in direct practice, administration, education and research. Registered psychiatric nurses are passionate about mental health, helping people and making a difference."

Continued on page 3 >>

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<< Continued from page 2

For more than a century, registered psychiatric nurses have been educated as a separate and distinct nursing profession in Manitoba and Western Canada.

"Psychiatric nursing education and practice focuses on mental health, mental illness, addictions and neurodevelopment, so we practise with that focus but in a variety of practice settings and contexts," Panteluk explains.

"While the focus of our education is on meeting mental health and psychosocial needs of the population, we are also educated as nurses."

Brandon University offers a bachelor of science in psychiatric nursing, and the 75-seat program is available in both Brandon and Winnipeg.

"Entry into the four-year degree psychiatric nursing program begins with a pre-psychiatric nursing year where students take pre-requisite courses required for entry into the second year of the program. There are a higher number of applicants than there are seats in the program, so the process is competitive," Panteluk says.

"Once accepted into the second year of the program, students can expect a rigorous education program with focus on coursework and clinical experiences in areas such as medical and surgical nursing, counselling skills for individuals, families and groups, as well as courses in palliative care, trauma-informed care, psychopathology and psychopharmacology, for example."

In Manitoba, 1,130 RPNs are currently practising in the profession, and the importance of their role is clear to see.

"The prolonged nature of the pandemic has left many people feeling scared, overwhelmed, worried and exhausted," Panteluk says.

"The stress, grief and trauma that Manitobans have experienced can lead to, or complicate, mental health challenges."

RPNs have continued to answer the call by being there for people who are struggling and by meeting people where they're at, she adds.

"Whether RPNs answered the call by participating directly in Manitoba's contact tracing or vaccination response or by assuming roles in remote learning centres to support children and youth or by being redeployed to new practice settings," she says, "they remained committed to providing care with a focus to communication, relationships, mental health, wellness and recovery."

ASSOCIATION OF REGULATED NURSES OF MANITOBA

The Association of Regulated Nurses of Manitoba (ARNM) serves as the professional voice of nurses in Manitoba, representing between 9,500 and 10,000 members.

"Nursing Week gives us a platform to share nurses' stories about how we answer the call," says interim executive director Joyce Kristjansson.

"We're working to create a better understanding of the many roles that nurses have and the dedication, skills and expertise they bring."

To celebrate National Nursing Week this year, the ARNM will feature members' stories on social media to highlight nurses' different work settings. They're also hosting a celebration of excellence on May 12, coinciding with Florence Nightingale's birthday, which will include professional nursing award winners. In addition, a professional development session will offer reflections on nursing in Manitoba.

For those looking for a rewarding career,

Kristjansson encourages them to consider nursing.

"There absolutely is a need for more nurses in Manitoba and all across the world. It's a national and international issue. It's a career that has all kinds of opportunities. You can work in so many different areas. I certainly have over my career," says Kristjansson, who has worked in four different provinces in areas ranging from acute care, community health and long-term care to leadership, research, informatics and education roles.

Unfortunately, over the last couple years, nurses have taken a lot of abuse from individuals, both physical and verbal, and many nurses are exhausted and feeling like they need to leave the profession."

There absolutely is a need for more nurses in Manitoba and all across the world. It's a national and international issue. It's a career that has all kinds of opportunities. You can work in so many different areas."

That's one reason why it's so important to express appreciation to nurses for their vital role.

"We're so proud of the dedication and the leadership that nurses show every day," Kristjansson says.

"We want to thank them for all that they're doing."



Joyce Kristjansson
Interim executive director of the Association of Regulated Nurses of Manitoba (ARNM)

"At the same time, we also need to look at how to keep people in nursing and retain them.

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Manitoba Nurses #AnswerTheCall

From the first light of day through the darkness of night, teams of dedicated, compassionate and highly-skilled health-care teams are there for Manitobans in every moment of need. Across every community and in every health-care setting, the efforts of Manitoba nurses are making a difference in the lives of patients, residents, clients and co-workers. On behalf of a grateful province and all health service delivery organizations, **we thank you.**

Interested in a career in caring?
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BLACK RIVER FIRST NATION MOBILE COVID-19 TESTING SITE
PHOTOS SUBMITTED

SUCCESS IN COLLABORATION:

CREATING HEALTHY CONNECTIONS AMONG COMMUNITIES

BY LAURALOU CICIERSKI

While Manitobans were encouraged to keep apart in order to contain the spread of COVID-19, health-care teams across Manitoba were coming together, joining resources and communities to support the needs and protect the health of populations at greatest risk.

In Manitoba's Interlake-Eastern region, mobile teams from Southeast Resource Development Council Corp., Interlake Reserves Tribal Council and Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority worked together in partnership with individual First Nations communities to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The mobile teams supported COVID-19 testing and worked with First Nations community pandemic teams. Together, they were deployed 22 times over the course of a pandemic response that has spanned two years.



Candace Linklater
interim director of clinical services with Southeast Resource Development Council Corp. (SERDC)

Cindy Garson is a health director with a nursing background for Interlake Reserves Tribal Council (IRTC), an organization that represents six First Nations communities including Dauphin River, Kinonjoshbegon, Lake Manitoba, Little Saskatchewan, Peguis and Pinaymootang. The organization's purpose to unify, maintain and expand the interests, lives and identity of its members formed the core of a combined response to pandemic threats in IRTC communities and beyond.

"This experience seemed to spark a sense of solidarity amongst health-care professionals from different organizations," Garson says. "I believe how well — and how quickly — the teams worked together has developed better working relationships across the jurisdictions and organizations."

A focus of the mobile teams was to provide support to communities managing the threat of a COVID-19 outbreak without requiring residents to leave the community in order to seek testing.

"The mobile team was a huge support for the communities as residents were able to remain in their home communities rather than travelling

out to a testing site," Garson says.

The mobile teams also offered some Interlake-Eastern RHA staff the chance to visit and work in communities where they may not have been in the past, an opportunity that Garson believes to be very valuable to future partnerships between the health region and the communities.



Partners in the mobile response teams saw how First Nations prepare, support and protect community members."

It's a statement echoed by registered nurse Candace Linklater, interim director of clinical



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CINDY GARSON, A HEALTH DIRECTOR WITH A NURSING BACKGROUND FOR INTERLAKE RESERVES TRIBAL COUNCIL (IRTC)

services with Southeast Resource Development Council Corp. (SERDC), an organization serving First Nations communities of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Black River, Hollow Water, Bloodvein, Little Grand Rapids, Pauingassi, Poplar River and Berens River. SERDC works to enhance the self-sufficiency and wellness of its member communities for current and future generations.

"Partners in the mobile response teams saw how First Nations prepare, support and protect community members," Linklater says. "They had the opportunity to see communities from our clients' perspectives."

Connie Nixon, the clinical team manager of primary health for Interlake-Eastern RHA and also a registered nurse, sees the time working closely

with First Nations partners in communities as enlightening.

"That time together has strengthened our working relationships. Everyone was motivated purely by the need to help and prevent transmission of illness," Nixon says.

The experience and exposure is generating new opportunities for collaboration, including opportunities for a number of independent First Nations communities including Berens River, Sagkeeng, Lake St. Martin and Fisher River to begin working with IRTC, SERDC and Interlake-Eastern RHA in a new project focused on the health of First Nations communities.

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The project, funded by Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, intends to leverage these established relationships in an effort to increase cancer screening rates in First Nations

communities. Local ceremony-based events will raise awareness of this important health measure, while the partnerships strengthened through COVID-19 will be used as a foundation from which health supports for First Nations communities can grow.



Connie Nixon
clinical team manager of primary health for Interlake-Eastern RHA and also a registered nurse

"Having already experienced working together, we've solidified our common goals to support our communities. We can work together more quickly — and more collaboratively — now because we know we can rely on each other," Linklater says.

"We work really well together so let's continue it."

Lauralou Cicierski is a communications lead with Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

RFHS / College of Nursing



THANK YOU!

The College of Nursing is proud to celebrate National Nursing Week, May 9 – 15, 2022.

We applaud our learners, faculty members, nurses and midwives across the province for answering the call to deliver high-quality health care over the last year. We thank you for your dedication and extraordinary work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#WeAnswerTheCall

umanitoba.ca/nursing



Thank you nurses for leading the way.

The past two years have reinforced the fact that health care services are precious — as are the people who provide them.

We thank our nurses for all they've done to support our clients, patients and residents during these challenging times. We salute them for their continued dedication and leadership not only within their own field of practice, but as valued members of the extended teams of health care professionals of which they are such a vital part.

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TEAMWORK DRIVES

CLOCKWISE FROM BACK LEFT: SHANE GUTOWSKI, RN; JOHANNA WALL, RN, BN, CLINICAL EDUCATOR ED; CINDY ASTORINO, RN, CRN; KATRINA, LPN.

PHOTO BY DARCY FINLEY.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE FOR GRACE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT NURSES

BY MIKE DALY

The nursing team supporting care at Grace Hospital's Emergency Department features a mix of savvy veterans and talented novice nurses. Like all great teams, they've rallied together when it has meant the most.

With 20 years of experience under her belt, emergency clinical educator Johanna Wall considers COVID-19 among the toughest adversaries she has come across. With increased demand for — and on — nurses making headlines nationwide, the team at the Grace has been working hard to keep pace.

"It is a struggle at times, no doubt about it. From increased patient volumes and changing procedures to visitor restrictions, the pandemic has added stress to an already-challenging job," Wall says.

"When we're in those moments where we feel in need of extra support, we first come together and help each other."

That's a sentiment echoed by Cindy Astorino, an emergency clinical resource nurse with five years' experience in the emergency department.

"Now that we've been living this for two years, it feels like the new normal," Astorino says.

"But it definitely did bring new challenges and reinforced the need to work as a team. You really see the value each member of the emergency team brings, from nurses, doctors and health-care aides to members of our extended team such as occupational and

physiotherapists, housekeepers and dietary staff — every professional that steps into the department."

The pressures faced by the members of the emergency department team haven't been exaggerated, she adds, but neither have reports of the team's commitment and dedication to patient care.

"What has come through is just how resilient we are and how we've learned to adapt to what is now 'a new normal.'"

“What has come through is just how resilient we are and how we've learned to adapt to what is now 'a new normal.'”

For the novices on the emergency department's team, the pandemic experience is the only one they've ever known. Registered nurse Shane Gutowski is one of the team's newer members. He says the pandemic offered an unparalleled opportunity to learn on the job.

"It's probably one of the best preparations that I could have asked for as an emergency department nurse," he says, while acknowledging that addressing public frustration over COVID-related visitor restrictions has been particularly difficult.

"Dealing with the concerns and frustration of worried families has been challenging

and it's often directed at us as their main point of contact," Gutowski says. "It's been hard but given the safety factors behind the restrictions, we had to reinforce the fact that we were doing our best and working hard for them and their loved ones."

Another challenging aspect of the pandemic has been the high acuity associated with COVID patients whose health status can change in the span of minutes from stable to critical. The team has supported one another in managing grief in the face of these heartbreaking situations, managing to turn their attention to care for the next patient in need of their help.

The newest member of the team, licensed practical nurse Katrina (who asked that her surname not be used) admits that maintaining that kind of professionalism when faced with extremely difficult situations is challenging.

"It's a hard job and it takes a lot out of you. We chose it, but it's not like we have superhuman abilities. We just work really hard," she says. "It can still be stressful, but each time I ask a colleague for help, they have never said anything other than, 'Yes, I'd love to help you.'"

The team, while insisting they do not possess superhuman abilities, is thankful for the support received from the public — everything, from shout-outs on social media to meals delivered to hungry and appreciative staff.

"Despite some frustration around visitation restrictions, it's nice to know that Manitobans understand we are focused on providing the best patient care we can," Wall says. "That's what motivates us, that's what keeps us going, and that's why we love emergency nursing."

Mike Daly is a communications specialist with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

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13,373
RNs

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Nurse Practitioners

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RAISING SPIRITS

AT NORTHERN SPIRIT MANOR

BY ASHLEY MCDONALD

CCOVID-19 has impacted all areas of health care over the past two years; however, its effect on the residents of Manitoba's long-term care facilities and the care teams who support their day-to-day needs has been particularly significant.

At the core of these multi-disciplinary care teams are compassionate, highly skilled nurses, supporting the direct care needs and mental health and wellness of residents. Long before the pandemic, these nurses and their colleagues were developing close relationships with residents and their families, based on trust and familiarity — bonds that became particularly important during the pandemic's many waves.

Ashley McDonald is a clinical resource nurse working at Northern Spirit Manor in Thompson, Man.

"We care for a number of residents in our home with cognitive impairment or dementia," McDonald says. "For them, understanding the pandemic was a challenge. Many felt abandoned and forgotten by family members."

These restrictions on access and activities, in place within long-term care homes throughout much of the pandemic, were implemented in an effort to minimize transmission of COVID-19 amongst a population significantly vulnerable to its worst effects.

It's been truly incredible to see how the nursing team at Northern Spirit Manor have risen to the challenge and made sure our residents received compassionate care during this very stressful time."

"Witnessing the distress this would cause residents, I think, has been one of the most heartbreaking moments for nurses — and all care providers," McDonald adds.

McDonald and her co-workers took it upon themselves to maintain the important connections between residents and their families in any way possible. Connecting residents with their loved ones became an increasingly important part of the job.

"When visitation was most limited, nurses arranged FaceTime and phone calls. Some family members would call and leave voicemails, so we would play the messages at times when they could not be face-to-face or have FaceTime visits," McDonald says.

Making COVID-19 information available in the residents' first language was also important, as staff worked to ensure residents understood the changes happening and why they were necessary.

"With the Indigenous culture and population within our facility, we arranged for COVID-19 messages to be provided in Cree to number of our residents so they could get information in their language," McDonald says. "This helped them to understand why their families weren't able to visit at times."

Nurses and staff also acted as a support to the residents' families, keeping them informed about how their loved one was doing. Sometimes, nurses had the difficult responsibility of relaying over the phone that a loved one had passed away.

"Nurses and other staff within the care home were, at times, the only family that the residents had when they went into the spirit world," McDonald says. "Knowing that the residents were not alone lessened some of the burden on

family members who were unable to be here when their loved one passed."

McDonald acknowledges the difficulty that nurses and other facility staff had in enforcing visitor limitations during the pandemic and highlights the extra steps that staff took to provide comfort and support to residents whose routines had been disrupted and who were feeling the effects of social isolation.

"We watched the mental health of some residents decline when they couldn't see their family members or interact with their friends in the home," McDonald says. "Nurses and other staff stepped in, played games with them, read to them, sat with them or even just had a cup of tea with them."

This extra effort came at a time when many staff were feeling the additional stress of potentially contracting or spreading COVID-19.

"At times when most of the residents had to remain in their room for meals, we walked the halls constantly, checking in with residents, keeping them safe and making sure they were eating and drinking," she says.

"It's been truly incredible to see how the nursing team at Northern Spirit Manor have risen to the challenge and made sure our residents received compassionate care during this very stressful time."

Ashley McDonald is a clinical resource nurse at Northern Spirit Manor in Thompson, Man.

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Please join us in thanking, celebrating, and honouring nurses at HSC Winnipeg for all that they do!

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Amber Wiens, BN MN RN
Nurse Educator, HSC Women's Hospital



Leader

Brenda Poapst, CRN
Head Nurse, RR6 Rehabilitation Unit



Advocate

Derick Fauni, RN BN
Nurse Educator, Renal Program



Problem-Solver

Leigh Douglas, RN BN
Clinical Resource Nurse, Interventional Radiology



Caregiver

Christine Dyck, RN BN
RR4/RS4 Plastics Emergency Decanting Clinic



Companion

Jeff Castillo, RN MN
Nurse, Virtual COVID-19 Outpatient Program (VCOP);
Clinical Resource Nurse, GD3



Collaborative teammate

Vickie Manning, RN BN CPN (C)
Clinical Resource Nurse, Thoracic Surgery Program



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ASHLEY MCDONALD IS A CLINICAL RESOURCE NURSE AT NORTHERN SPIRIT MANOR IN THOMPSON, MAN.

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INTENSIVE CARE NURSE MAURITA KIESMAN SHARES A SMILE WITH HER DOG LINCOLN, A CERTIFIED PET THERAPY VISITOR, AT HSC WINNIPEG. PHOTO BY DARCY FINLEY.

DYNAMIC DUO

BRINGS JOY TO STAFF AND PATIENTS

BY ESTEFANIA WUJKIW

"Dogs have a way of finding the people who need them."
— Thom Jones

In a year filled with uncertainty, isolation and loss, many Manitobans have turned to the unconditional love and support of their furry friends.

At HSC Winnipeg, where health-care workers have dedicated themselves to the care and support of Manitoba's sickest patients throughout the pandemic, specially trained dogs and their handlers have also been working hard to provide comfort and support to staff working on the front lines.

Maurita Kiesman has devoted the past three decades of her career to caring for the sick and the injured as an intensive care nurse at HSC Winnipeg.

"I have found nursing to be a very rewarding yet, at times, all-consuming profession. It has given me the opportunity to see many aspects of life," says Kiesman, who formally retired in 2019 but maintained her role as a bedside nurse.

"I'm a very experienced ICU nurse but there were days when it was so overwhelming to come into the ICU. I have never, in my life, witnessed some of the things I witnessed over these past two years."

One of the biggest impacts COVID-19 had on the ICU, according to Kiesman, was the sheer amount of patient movement required not only into but also within the unit because patients were incredibly sick.

"Over the course of a 12-hour shift, there were many moving pieces, and while staff are

trained to deal with life-threatening situations, each loss is felt deeply by the care teams and that emotional weight can be heavy," Kiesman says.

Helping staff cope with their experiences is the job of HSC's Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team, a group made up of HSC staff who have received training specific to critical incident stress management and who volunteer their services. In the summer of 2021, the CISM team partnered with St. John Ambulance to begin offering animal therapy visits to staff at the facility.

At HSC Winnipeg, where health-care workers have dedicated themselves to the care and support of Manitoba's sickest patients throughout the pandemic, specially trained dogs and their handlers have also been working hard to provide comfort and support to staff working on the front lines.

Kiesman jumped at the opportunity to support her co-workers in a new and different way, becoming a certified pet therapy visitor alongside her four-legged friend Lincoln, a nine-year-old golden doodle.

Together, the duo visit staff in clinical areas of

HSC every two weeks.

"When I come in with Lincoln on my time as a volunteer and I see people, their faces light up behind their masks," Kiesman says. "He is the great equalizer. It doesn't matter if it's someone in a leadership position or someone who answers the door, his affection is equal no matter the role."

During some visits, Kiesman shares, staff who had been overcome with emotion due to the events of the day were offered immediate comfort by Lincoln's presence.

"On those days, it was the most rewarding job I have ever done in my life," Kiesman says.

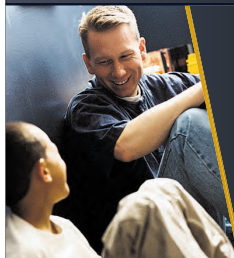
The weight of responsibility for a patient's

outcome and the sense of comfort offered by a few moments of unconditional love and kindness are both things that Kiesman knows well from personal experience.

"During the pandemic, there were shifts when I would have to sit in my car in the parkade afterwards to unwind, but when I drove up to my house, I'd see that big, fluffy tail wagging in the window and I would walk in to be greeted by my own therapy dog."

Estefania Wujkiw is a senior communications specialist at Health Sciences Centre Winnipeg - Shared Health.

REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES



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THE COLLEGE OF
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LESSONS IN TEAMWORK:

NURSE EDUCATOR LEARNS A NEW ROLE

BY ANGELA LOVELL

Ryan Mabon was just one year into his role as a home-care nurse educator in Southern Health-Santé Sud when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, bringing with it many new protocols and procedures that he, like all health-care workers, needed to quickly learn.

For Mabon, not only did the pandemic mean a pivot back to learning at a time when he was beginning to feel "at home" in his new position, it also required him to move quickly and efficiently to ensure that new information was shared regularly and clearly with staff supporting home care in Southern Health-Santé Sud.



Everyone came together to ensure the highest level of safety for clients and each other, taking care with modifications that were continuously happening as we learned more about the virus."

As a nurse educator, Mabon oversees the educational needs of 450 home-care staff, supports transitional care needs of clients and families, and contributes to policy and procedure development for the region. COVID-19 required many changes to where and how the education needs of staff were supported but made the sharing of information even more important.

"Most of the work I do with staff is hands-on and usually happens in a room, learning together, or through a series of meetings during the course of a week," Mabon says. "Shifting to a virtual environment felt like learning a completely new role. My work became centred around evolving COVID-19 information so that I could share it

with staff — and support them through the changes."

A nurse for the past 11 years, Mabon is very familiar with the connections that form within care teams and between health-care workers and their clients. While the experiences and challenges of working in a health-care environment during the pandemic have been different, those connections remained strong.

"It was amazing to see the support network that was immediately created. Everyone came together to ensure the highest level of safety for clients and each other, taking care with modifications that were continuously happening as we learned more about the virus," Mabon says.

"We really became like a family as we faced every change and fear together."

Mabon is quick to recognize the enormous efforts of the care teams he supports every day as well as the pandemic work of his wife, also a nurse. Inspired by their work to support direct patient, resident and client care, Mabon signed up to work in a COVID-19 testing site, where he administered tests for young Manitobans. That experience gave Mabon some of the moments that will stick with him long after the pandemic has ended.

"It's an incredible feeling to see children go from absolute fear and tears to happy smiles at the test site," he says. "Easing their fears and letting them know that they are the real heroes, keeping their friends and family safe, that was amazing."

Working in different areas of nursing over the course of his career and throughout the pandemic has opened Mabon's eyes to the many different opportunities that nursing in Manitoba has to offer.

"Nursing is not a narrow path. In my role, some days I could be in a client's home or in the office supporting education virtually or making a presentation," Mabon says.

"There are many other opportunities in other areas, working in a hospital, a personal care home or as part of a transport team travelling to all corners of our province. There are so many possibilities available to anyone who pursues a career in nursing."

Angela Lovell is a contributing writer for Southern Health-Santé Sud.



RYAN MABON, HOME-CARE NURSE EDUCATOR

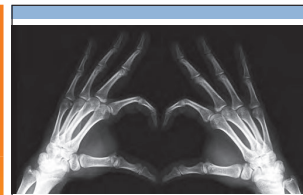
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MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE NURSES

PLAY PIVOTAL ROLE IN COVID CARE

BY BLAINE KRAUSHAAR

Incorporating mental wellness supports into the development of care plans for personal care home residents in Prairie Mountain Health (PMH) has been a significant focus throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

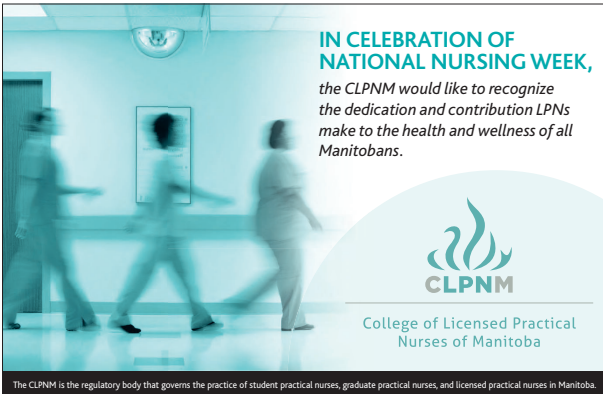
These supports are thanks to a specialized group of mental health resource nurses (MHRNs) whose expertise in psychiatric and mental health services for long-term care residents, including those with cognitive disorders, has made a marked difference to the isolation experienced by residents during periods of visitor restrictions and limits placed on group activities and interactions.

The team, made up of 15 nurses distributed throughout the region, works under the leadership of Christine Miner, manager of mental health for PMH.


“Ensuring residents were able to connect with family was an important part of efforts to help ease feelings of isolation.**”**

Outbreaks were a very real event during the pandemic’s various waves, making the efforts of the MHRNs both welcome and extremely impactful.

“Every single MHRN’s site has declared an outbreak over the past two years,” Janz says. “During those events, maintaining connections was really important. Something as small as a visit, interaction and smile — despite the masks — meant so much to residents and the team.”



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“The team has stepped up in so many ways, supporting residents during isolation and offering assistance to staff adapting to new ways of working in the pandemic,” says Miner, who is also a registered psychiatric nurse. “In many cases, they have also stepped into direct care roles to assist when their help was needed.”

Michelle Janz, MHRN client care co-ordinator, says mental wellness supports not only limited the feelings of social isolation and the disruption of routines for residents, they also kept families informed and connected to their loved ones.



Michelle Janz
MHRN client care co-ordinator



John Cail
MHRN team member

“The team has stepped up in so many ways, supporting residents during isolation and offering assistance to staff adapting to new ways of working in the pandemic.**”**

For residents, particularly those with cognitive disorders, an outbreak — and changes required to manage it — created significant confusion, adds MHRN team member John Cail.

“Ensuring residents were able to connect with family was an important part of efforts to help ease feelings of isolation,” Janz says. “We were also often a reassuring voice for families, assisting with daily calls to provide updates on the residents’ condition, particularly important when visitation was limited or the site was in an outbreak.”

“Validation of that confusion and empathy for a resident struggling to understand it are key elements of

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Thank you to all our nurses who are the backbone of health care for Manitoba patients!

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CHRISTINE MINER, MANAGER OF MENTAL HEALTH FOR PMH

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keeping the resident at the centre of the care we provide," says Cail, who assisted at eight different sites experiencing outbreaks. That experience, he says, impressed upon him the benefits of establishing a small routine when possible.



Sylvie Lesage
MHRN based out of Glenboro

"Often, just the active presence of a partner for something as simple as walking can help ground the resident to person, place and time while instilling hope that things will go back to normal," Cail says.

Instilling hope and restoring a sense of normal often involved the use of innovative ideas and activities organized with a pandemic-specific twist, adds Sylvie Lesage, an MHRN based out of Glenboro.

"Thinking outside the box, at times, was necessary. We worked with the dietary services team to include a 'joke

of the day' on meal trays to keep spirits up."

Other activities, when visitor access was most limited, included staff helping with services such as haircuts, schools parading in their Halloween costumes outside residents' windows, and communities organizing greeting cards to be sent to residents.

The team — and the residents they care for — will not forget the feeling of community and teamwork that lifted them up and gave a necessary boost during difficult times. Similarly, the community is not likely to forget the many nurses and other health-care workers who have answered the call each and every day.

Validation of that confusion and empathy for a resident struggling to understand it are key elements of keeping the resident at the centre of the care we provide."

"We cannot express enough thanks to nurses and all health-care providers for the dedication, commitment and compassion they have brought to work every day," Miner adds.

Blaine Kraushaar is a communications specialist with Prairie Mountain Health.

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